

DNREC Fish & Wildlife Natural Resources Police Youth Academies graduate 59 students

DOVER – This year's DNREC Fish & Wildlife Natural Resources Police Youth Academy program was a huge success, with 59 students completing the academies' curriculum the past summer. Now in its fourth year, the popular program is geared to students ages 12 to 15 with an interest in natural resources and law enforcement, with a focus on acquiring or enhancing boating, fishing, and hunting skills.

Sessions for the Basic Youth Academy were held at the DNREC Division of Fish & Wildlife's Little Creek Hunter Education Training Center near Dover and Ommelanden Hunter Education Training Center near New Castle. In addition to introductory boating, fishing, and hunting skills, the students were exposed to various aspects of a Natural Resources Police officer's daily routine. For patrol work, students completed field scenarios that included checking deer stands and duck blinds, using a decoy deer to nab poachers in the act, and making contact with visitors to Delaware's wildlife areas managed by the Division of Fish & Wildlife. They were also given instruction in the safe operation of boats and learned about on-the-water enforcement activities.

Students who completed the Kent County Basic Youth Academy were: Michael Atchley of Frederica, Nathaniel Atchley of Frederica, Jaden Azato of Lewes, Aaron Bartsch of Townsend, Ben Barwick of Georgetown, Logan Boyer of Magnolia, Ethan Couch of Laurel, Kenzey Curran of Smyrna, Justin Didden of Dover, Aiden Dill of Camden, Aiden Durham of Camden-Wyoming, Sean Jones of Wyoming, Joshua Kenton of Harrington, Elizabeth

Krajewski of Lewes, Jamieson Martin of Clayton, Faith Mitchell of Milford, Kieran Morris of Middletown, Victoria Pedigo of Camden-Wyoming, Samuel Pluta of Carlisle, PA, Rhett Robbins of Frederica, Carissa Towery of Dover, Olivia Tryon of Harrington, Benjamin Warren of Dagsboro, and Walker Weiss of Selbyville.

Students who completed the New Castle County Basic Youth Academy were: Rachel Antonio of New Castle, Gavin Bradley of Middletown, Tyrone Brown of Middletown, Cayleb Catherman of Middletown, Edward Cobb of Newark, Bradyn Coleman of Newark, Jimmy David of Middletown, Vinny Helms of Townsend, Kolin Kaiser of Middletown, Hunter Landry of Magnolia, Harry Long of Wilmington, Gabrielle Marrero of Bear, Chris Napolin of Townsend, Isabella Poore of New Castle, Dawlat Refaie of Wilmington, Walter Samuels of Middletown, Justin Saylor of Wilmington, Makenzey Stephenson of Newark, Maddison Stubblebine of Newark, and Sawyer Wilkins of Landenburg, Pa.

In addition to the Basic Youth Academy students being presented their boating and hunter education certificates at graduation, Fish & Wildlife Natural Resources Police instructors presented awards to five students in each class. For the Kent County class, awards were presented to Michael Atchley for leadership, Jamieson Martin for sportsmanship, Aiden Durham for sharpshooting, Sean Jones for archery, and Ethan Couch for fishing skills. For the New Castle County class, award recipients were Tyrone Brown for leadership, Walker Weiss for sportsmanship, Kolin Kaiser for sharpshooting, Walter Samuels for archery, and Harry Long for fishing skills.

At the Advanced Youth Academy, students acquired skills for camping, fishing, and hunting, and were exposed to various aspects of a Fish & Wildlife Natural Resources Police officer's daily routine. Students obtained their turkey hunter certification, assisted wildlife biologists with capturing and banding mourning doves, assisted fisheries biologists with

pond seining, participated in shotgun and rifle target shooting, a fishing derby and bird watching, and camped at Lums Pond State Park's primitive campground. To finish up the camp, students participated in a public outreach event with officers displaying the Operation Game Theft trailer at Cabela's in Newark.

Students who completed the New Castle County Advanced Youth Academy were: Aaron Bartsch of Townsend, Brooke Boileau of Middletown, Gavin Bradley of Middletown, Bradyn Coleman of Newark, Zoe Given of Middletown, Kolin Kaiser of Middletown, Hunter Landry of Magnolia, Harry Long of Wilmington, Gabrielle Marrero of Bear, Kieran Morris of Middletown, Domenick Rathoff of Bear, Harrison Rathoff of Bear, Emily Scott of Middletown, Heather Scott of Middletown, and Walker Weiss of Selbyville.

In addition to the Advanced Youth Academy students receiving their turkey hunter education certificate at graduation, Fish & Wildlife Natural Resources Police instructors presented awards to Walker Weiss for sportsmanship, Aaron Bartsch for sharpshooting, and Zoe Given for fishing skills as well as leadership.

DNREC Fish & Wildlife Natural Resources Police thank the following sponsors who helped make this year's youth academies possible: Cabela's, Freemire & Associates of Camden, PSC Contracting, Inc., Safari Club International – Delaware Valley Chapter, and Logo Motive Custom Apparel.

To learn more about Fish & Wildlife Natural Resources Police and the Youth Academies, please visit <http://www.dnrec.delaware.gov/fw/Pages/Enforcement.aspx>.

- Follow Fish & Wildlife Natural Resources Police on Facebook, www.facebook.com/pages/Delaware-Fish-Wildlife-Natural-Resources-Police.
- Follow Fish & Wildlife Natural Resources Police on

Twitter, https://twitter.com/DE_FW_NRPolice.

Contact: Sgt. Brooke Mitchell, Fish & Wildlife Natural Resources Police, 302-739-9913 or 302-382-7167, or Joanna Wilson, DNREC Public Affairs, 302-739-9902

-End-